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THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

SOME METAPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRAGMATIC THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE[1]

CARTESIAN dualism has persisted because of the demand of the physical scientist for a free field. The idealist-philosopher, of the nineteenth century, and the scientist were in two different fields. There could, therefore, be no conflict between them, although in this partnership the scientist dominated, for the philosopher had eventually to come back to him.[2] While deduction was the method of the philosopher, the freedom of the scientist lay in his experimental method. Accordingly, the scientist maintained a world that would be free from difficulties that would not answer to that method. If the philosopher found paradoxes in the scientist's taking experience generally, sometimes as objective and sometimes as subjective, the scientist shrugged his shoulders. He was getting results with methods that would have been even more paradoxical if synthesized with the Hegelian dialectic. What could not be subjected to experiment was, therefore, turned over to the philosopher, who was dogmatist at large.

But in our century the philosopher, like the scientist, has come to a better grasp of the significance of scientific method. And at the same time the scientist has been forced into the field that he had assigned to philosophy, the field of consciousness. For the field from which he had excluded consciousness became inadequate to scientific possibility. Nevertheless, consciousness emerged in the scientist's field in a very different sense than it had in that of the philosopher. Philosophic attempts to deal with the "immediate data of consciousness" have been, and even yet are all too much, interested primarily in the "immediate" rather than in the "data." It is significant, therefore, that as a problem of science, the field of consciousness has not appeared as one of abstractly immediate content, e.g., secondary qualities. Consciousness has appeared as a

[1] Read in part at the meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, New Haven, December, 1931. Mr. Dewey has said that for a long time books and articles by Professor Mead would continue to appear. This paper owes much more to Professor Mead than would be indicated by any set of footnotes.

[2] Royce: *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 168.

problem for the scientist in the failure of absolute entities. It has appeared as perspectives of consentient sets determined by their relation to so-called percipient events, as frames of reference involving observers, and as statements of results in terms of methods of measurements. And the concept of "method" here introduced marks the field of consciousness as definitely manipulatory in character; a notion that is further evident when one considers the function and importance of the laboratory in scientific achievement.

What in my estimation is important here is that the scientist as observer is much more than an individual to which things are present, or more even than an individual who can indicate them to others. Thus Mr. McGilvary [3] in his exposition of some of the phases of relativity finds need for "observers." But these are not necessarily the sort of observers in which we are interested. They do not make scientific observation in the sense of observation as it is considered in discussions of scientific method. I mean simply to say that Mr. McGilvary in his simplified illustration could easily have substituted photoelectric cells for his observers. The significant thing is that the scientist finds it necessary to organize data in terms of frames of reference in relation to each other. In short, the absolute world, which the scientist had constructed in the two previous centuries, has disappeared between his fingers.

Consciousness is found in the actual organizing of perspectives, be they in terms of fields of force, or of environment, or of consentient sets, or more generally, of experience. The older parallelism located consciousness in the individual. But now consciousness is found in the reflective scientific activity of an individual already located in an experiential world. On the one hand, the environment is not just a number of sensory attributes, or *states* of consciousness, nor on the other is it irrelevant to the individual. The individual is in a field of activity. And just as Hume could turn his back calmly upon his solipsism to play backgammon, so the modern psychologist begins simply by accepting the individual as living inside the world. The psychologist of the juvenile court wants to find out what sort of a world it is in which the child is living. The child may have parents that irritate him. But the psychologist is not interested in the absoluteness of irritable parents.

It is said that a special wasp must bore into the flower of the Smyrna fig tree and carry the pollen. The wasp is an insect and the tree is a plant. There is nevertheless a short intersection of those two biological histories. What the wasp or the tree does before or after the pollenization is not in the history of the other. But the man who cultivates the tree scientifically, and imports the wasp, has

[3] *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. XL, p. 358.

somehow gotten into both histories. In doing so he is neither fig nor wasp nor both. He is reflective, and the histories are there for him as matters of reflection. The wasp and the tree have no intention or purpose, though they are each essential to the life of the other. To get such an intention each of them must be conscious of what the other is about. If the wasp were worried about how to keep the fig trees going, it would be fairly conscious. But actually, I suppose, the wasp is getting along under the stress of immediate circumstances. In the case of the grower not only is there the intersection, but the individual gets into the history or perspective of the other—and this is consciousness. It means putting oneself at the place of the other in point of reference. Logically, one can view the universe from the standpoint of a wasp.

There is, some suppose, a fundamental difference between the unreflective and the reflective attitudes. In the unreflective attitude, all items of experience are immediately experienced and as being directly there, do not require an "inside" or "something yet to be revealed." But the principally important fact is that as such they occur in a temporal order. They may have different dates in the act. Time is definitely in everything, at least in everything outside the manipulatory areas. What is directly there in the experience of the organism may be said to be simultaneous with the organism, and lies in its "now." In so far as what is there in experience holds forth a "promise" of something further, it may be called a stimulus. Thus we can have a situation in which what is "there" is not merely there, but holds a promise for the future. As a promise, the item is *surface*—qualitative.

We are not going back to consciousness as a secretion of content by the nervous system. Meanings do get expression as reactions of the organism, and obviously some of the conditions for the organization and continuity of action lie in the structure of the organism. What we do with regard to the thing represents in some sense the overt expression of a motor attitude called out as a tendency to act in that direction. The item as a stimulus to immediate activity calls out in the individual a terminal attitude which is definitely in the experience of the individual. The continuous interplay between the complex and progressing stimulus and the response, initiates, maps out, and controls the intermediate action or approach of the individual, so that the way of approach is dependent upon how he is going to take hold of things. The way in which we are ready to sit down at the table determines our approach to it. What the table is may not be in our consciousness at all. So long as we have the terminal attitude we do not feel called upon to make a judgment as to what the thing is. *There are no alternatives present to us.*

The response is conditioned, determined, dynamic, and progressive. And this unreflective action, as in the case of instant decisions of experienced executives, is direct and remarkably sure. Only reflectively do we hunt out among presented alternatives enduring articles on the basis of which to act intelligently. Reflection is the refusal to commit oneself immediately to one's intuitions.

The world in which problems arise or events take place is a world that is had, rather than a mathematical world of points and instants, or a logical world. It is only in the perceptual world that we get reality. In this perceptual world the "distance" of the thing is a promissory character. And the distant thing is temporally, as well as spatially, separated from us. If we do not stop to think, if we just act toward what is there, then the reality not in immediate experience lies ahead, and we are not trying to state to ourselves what the thing is. The bird pursuing the moth has the reality ahead of it. He is responding to a stimulus the reality of which is there in his experience, but not as enjoyed eating. The distant things always lie ahead of us in terms of time and passage, which belong to extension. This thing just ahead is reality; it is what we are after, and we do not experience it as existing now. Lisa crossing the river on the ice cakes reacts to the cake ahead as she hops from the one on which she paused. The reality of the latter is there in her experience. But the reality of the cake to which she responds, lies in her (immediate) future.

In reflective activity we stop to put ourselves into the situation or perspective ahead. Hence the sort of reality in which we are interested reflectively is referred to the past or to the future. The problem that remains, then, as Professor Mead has pointed out, is how one gets into different perspectives. It is the problem of formulating a theory of the cognitive relation of the individual in his environment. The whole function of consciousness lies in the relation we set up between the promise and the fulfillment. It occurs in the stoppage of the act, that intervenes between the stimulus and the consummation. If we have two acts which exclude each other with reference to the terminal object, they lead to conflict and inhibition. Direct action for a time is stopped, and there is more or less breakdown in habit. But this gives only an opportunity for reflection. Reflection may in fact not take place. The stoppage may occur in lower forms. Thus the dog stops as the man prepares to throw a stone. But he does not reflect. Another impulse sweeps him and he turns yelping in flight. This stoppage in the human individual is often taken advantage of and is necessary for reflection. The wise man, unlike the beast that perisheth, crosses his bridges before he comes to them. In the interest of the future

we seize upon the interim to search all the now for possible trace of the permanent—for things that will remain the same with us and upon which we may depend. Reflection comes upon us in the experimental activity of representing to ourselves selected elements that are alternatives or possibilities simultaneous with each other. That which is common to the conflicting elements gets into the experience of the organism and becomes the condition of the solution. In the direction of this solution motor attitudes are called out as tendencies to act. There must, therefore, be a mechanism for thus calling out these responses; and it is primarily lingual in character.

Professor Mead has given an eminently able statement of this in his analysis of the "Significant Symbol."[4] As Professor A. W. Moore summed it up, "we know that language is not a tag attached to the results of abstraction but that it is a necessary part not only of the act of abstraction, but of the experience of an object and the existence of a self."[5] If one can, when exciting another to act, call out in himself the tendency toward the same act, he is in a far better way of being conscious of what he is about. The same function is in him and in the other. In this sense he is getting something that is universal. Here interlocutory conditions obtain, and these conditions present the reflective object. But though it is social in nature, it is not necessarily public. We are thus here interested in the retroactive effect of communication upon the individual. In so far as the individual in communication indicates things to others, he indicates them to himself. Forthwith, they are there for him as "selected out"—as universals. As such they become subject to manipulation, criticism, and elaborate technical development. In the individual it is the means of presenting or of indicating to himself in a universal fashion the alternatives characteristic of the manipulatory area. This is the achievement of the reflective object. One "turns it over in his thought" and "views it from all sides." In no sense is this foreign to the physical world, for the physical object lies in and is gotten hold of in the manipulatory area. The timeless characteristic, of a universal, is that it is communicable to others and to oneself. In reflection, then, the permanent, static relations occur by which we import the future into the now, or place ourselves in the perspective ahead. Hence it is an abstraction from the passage characteristic of the perceptual world.

The ideal of science has been stated to be one of reducing passage to an instant, leaving a static world in which there is a distribution of compresent, timeless particles. In it everything is clamped

[4] "The Genesis of the Self and Social Control," *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, 1925.

[5] *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy*, p. 279.

down. The whole universe is simply an object establishing one perspective. Everything is an absolute object in external relationship to everything else. If we take the whole universe at an instant, then we have a world of things "simply located," in Mr. Whitehead's phraseology. The things are simply what they are. If we can abolish passage and say that this is what the world is, then we abolish motion. We have an absolute world. There is no perspective, save that of God, and there is no time. Everything is what it is and where it is out of relation to everything else.

Bergson has insisted that if we turn to the psychical we have a sort of extension or time different from the physical. In the former the pulses of time are not commensurable. Things are coming in and slipping out of experience. The processes of change that are going on are so identified with the content in the psychical that they can not be abstracted or separated. At times things hurry along —at times they drag. And the excitement or drag of an experienced thing is an essential part of it. This sort of process is not physical. Only if we kill the process, can we cut up its corpse into commensurable units.

What Bergson overlooks is that stopping the process is an essential part of the process. We have to stop to consider, to speculate, to get hold of something that endures. This stoppage is not a destruction of reality, but it is a directing of reality. Were it just reality that we wanted, any reality rather than some particular sort of reality, we could go on with the stream allowing it to dash our heads against the rocks, and our place would be taken by the more fortunate. But if we would direct reality, we must stop the process. It is in this moment of stoppage that we set up the permanent space. We work out plans and patterns in an enduring world that is co-gredient with ourselves. The instant, as employed by science, is not a pictorial representation of the specious present, for the latter is qualitatively variable and has a temporal spread. But the instant answers logically to the specious present as a cross section of change. The question is not, therefore, one of the instant as such which will have no temporal spread. It is rather one of getting a durable hold upon the precarious passage that is essential to the perceptual world. The term "a world at an instant" is an ideal. It is not getting the world to a knife-edge present, but a selection of the permanent. The actual selecting takes the form of manipulating what we have here and now in the laboratory, in the observatory, or in the field of research. This manipulatory activity is obvious in a multitude of guises: of measuring, of reducing the qualitative extent so that one can find simplicity, of finding the limit of series, of formulating *a priori* systems. Even in "pure"

logic we have rules of operation which may quite as well be called rules of manipulation. In a real sense then, the world in which we are reflectively active is the world that we are handling. The world as an object of knowledge is an extension of the "now" or manipulatory area pushed out, just as Newton extended the falling weights, the swinging pendula and the rolling spheres of Galileo to the heavens. This introduction of the future into the now is the establishment of co-grediency, and the stoppage represents the relation of the co-gredient objects to the percipient event. The distant or promissory character changes to simultaneity. Time is eliminated, and with static objects of knowledge we build an hypothetical world in which the *objects stand to each other in a logical rather than in a temporal relation.* It is only in a world made up of static instants, moments, or "nows" that we can have a mechanistic universe. But this is not the real world, although it is part of the modern world. It is a real hypothesis for prediction and control. In short, the manipulatory area represents the world of things which on the one hand have ceased to be merely stimuli to immediate action, and which on the other hand stop short of the consummatory phase. Those things are objects of knowledge. When the physicist leaves his instruments in the laboratory and returns home to become a domestic animal, the beefsteak that he eats is not a swarm of atoms. It is no longer a *means* of chemical analysis; it is an *end* of human endeavor.

After all, it is the world that we see, smell, and hold that we wish to control. And science must come back to this perceptual world. The hypothesis must be brought back to experimental data. The theory of an electron causing the saltatory motion of oil between two electrodes may or may not be substantiated on further test. But the oil is "there" in experience and does not need to be referred to consciousness. If the theory is discarded, the oil will remain over to become the basis of, or to be taken into account by, another theory. In immediate experience we are not presented with abstract universals or with mutually independent particulars. In the attempt to return to the world the perceptual goods which had been purloined from it, the realist has with surprising generosity returned much more than was taken away. Thus Mr. Russell loads the penny with an infinite number of characters, shapes, etc. It is no longer an object but a clutter of renovated states of consciousness.

The realist is seeking a content that is identical in all relevant perspectives, i.e., irrelevant to any standpoint. If I may change the illustration of the penny to one that suggests problems a little less trivial, whether we are talking of pennies or of dollars we must say that wealth, for example, as a separate entity is non-existent. But

the scientist is not asking what is the reality of, or back of, perspectives; he is showing the means of change, exchange, or translation between them. If we ask what we mean by a dollar we get a Fisher dollar, a wealth of dollars in wheat, or credit on books. We get a formula of translation. When we get to the reality, we get it in terms of consummations, whereas the realist seeks reality in an object outside the perspective. So far as we have a common object we have a common perspective, or an intersection of perspectives. For example, we say that the same thing has different values in different situations, or we say that a thing has one motion in one frame of reference, and another in another frame. What is the meaning of this "same thing that is different"? Is there implied an Aristotelian substance or unity and its accidents? Apparently it is out of some such identity that the realist would create his absolute world in which there is a distribution of perspectives; and also there is an insoluble problem of their relation to the absolute. The statement of what a thing is must have a reference to the point from which we start. There is no reality-in-general, or statement-at-large of an absolute. To seek such a statement is to seek a relation that is paramount, a *sumumgenus*. Such a conception lapses because since medieval times we can not find any such paramount relation. We do not find given in nature an absolute time and space. The setting up of these paramount relations, religious, physical, and what not, has been social and of the essence of myth. Of course, it is a simple thing to take one's own attitude as the absolute world. The sense in which a thing is said to be the same entity having different values, or is said to be the same entity in different perspectives, is not a relation of substance and accidents, but is the sense in which a thing in one perspective can be translated into a thing in another. The world as relative occurs in the perspective of the individual. But one does not surround his own perspective by an absolute world when he relates it to another.

We have all felt the egotism of other people who were unable to suppose that there are more things than ever occurred in their limited experience. But the significance of the disapprobation in the term "egotism" can not be very forceful if it means no more than that an acceptance of our attitude in substitution would be an achievement of the absolute. We can not expect anyone to act intelligently about anything with which he has had no contact in any fashion. The exhortation, then, is toward open-mindedness and an outlook for exceptions which are characteristic of a scientific attitude. Larger perspectives may be achieved, but not the absolute, unless we have recourse to "self-evident intuitions" or to some other form of dogma. An experimental or scientific attitude will

not give it to us. Thus Mr. Whitehead says "I do not hold Induction to be in its essence the derivation of general laws. It is the divination of some characteristics of a particular future from the known characteristics of a particular past. The wider assumption of general laws holding for all cognizable occasions appears a very unsafe addendum to attach to this limited knowledge."[6] Much as Hobson points out,[7] the scientist is interested in formulating some order between things perceived, without questioning what is back of them in any ontological sense. It is significant that scientists do not frequently argue as to whether or not things exist corresponding to scientific objects, but whether or not such scientific objects are fruitful. On that basis scientific objects are used or dropped. The objects of science are thus essentially functional, and hence suggest that the theory of knowledge be stated upon this relativistic basis. The difficulty that I find in carrying this out upon the basis of Mr. Whitehead's philosophy is that for him "objects" are antecedently in nature *as objects*. They are absolutes by which he hopes to guarantee the order of nature. Man has long sought to find security in nature by putting some socially achieved object at the bottom of it to insure its conformity to human wishes. Were it not for God, or laws, or objects of some sort guiding nature along the straight path of order, nature would soon become chaotic. But there is in fact nothing to guarantee that any given problem, if it is really a problem, will be solved by the means at our disposal. To cease the search for such a guarantee will not avoid all metaphysical problems. But it will avoid many prolix and dubious metaphysical speculations that have no other justification. Objects are social achievements. They are not things that make nature go. They are things that enable a human organism to act in some fashion more effectively with regard to some observable things in nature. I would not even deny that an end of knowing may be to perceive order in nature. But it should not be overlooked that when the end of knowing is reached, then knowing is ended.

Things that occur in the experience of one individual differ more or less importantly from those that occur in others. On this basis many have said that all experiences are absolutely esoteric. It would seem, however, that the social mechanism makes possible the selection, presentation, and entry into experience of several individuals, certain definite and relatively common objects. And these common objects make up the perspective common to that group. The participation of the thing in the "universal Idea" or in the common world is social and it represents the relation of the thing

[6] Whitehead: *Science and the Modern World*, p. 65.

[7] Hobson: *The Domain of Natural Science*, p. 453.

to the common world, which is an organization of perspectives. In contrast to this, the difficulties and hopes of ancient speculation lay in the magic of a metaphysical participation. The physical science of that world had as its technique congruencies—geometry—which were brought within the manipulatory area naïvely as a matter of course. Thus the distance-perspective was ignored. This physics, however, was adequate for their mechanics. Problems of the heavens, etc., were thought to be solved if they could be resolved to geometrical forms. It is significant that those *forms* were not our *concepts* which refer to the individual, but were the essence, nature, and reality of the thing. Patent rights and copy-rights, so far as they emphasize that the Idea is the property of the individual rather than of the group, would have been an anachronism. Thus they came back to a dialectical content which endured, for a statement of fundamental nature or ultimate reality. Ancient thought could find validity and reality only in that which was universal. Thought, then, had to see through the peculiarities of the individual to the universal. Because of this lack of attention to particulars, they could not criticize their perspective and had no competent *control* over methods of observation.

Modern man does not find reality in his hypotheses, but in his perspectives. "Data do not implicate persistent structure. They appear first of all as exceptions."[8] The "common world is continually breaking down. Problems arise in it and demand solution. They appear as the exceptions to which I have referred. The exceptions appear first of all in the experience of individuals and while they have the form of common experiences they run counter to the structure of the common world. The experience of the individual is precious because it preserves these exceptions. . . . They are the data of science. If they have been put in the form of common experiences, the task appears of reconstructing the common world so that they may have their place and become instances instead of exceptions."[9] In so far as we date things of our common world, in so far as we seek the source of an idea, we must come back to the individual simply because what escapes the individual escapes knowledge. Facts are bits of biography. They get into the form of common experience only in so far as the individual reports them. As a theory progresses in acceptance, we no longer isolate out parts as biographical bits as such. They become merged in the timeless monotony of textbooks that misleads elementary students of physics, as well as some learned philosophers, into

[8] Mead: "A Pragmatic Theory of Truth," *University of California Publications in Philosophy*, Vol. 11, p. 70.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

thinking that truths have no histories. The scientist comes back to what he terms experimental data. From this he constructs the formula or universal law. The disorganized "data" become organized "objects." Here he reaches the goal, perhaps, of ancient thought. But ancient thought was not willing to recognize the instrumental nature of the universal in relation to the individual experience.

Following the pragmatic doctrine, we are attempting to "put" reality into the perspectives of the perceptual world and to see what it becomes in the process. We find that we must state the perceptual world in terms of things—physical, psychological, legal, geological, economic, etc.—that get their reality in the manipulatory area. As far as the distant thing lies beyond our reach—beyond the manipulatory area—it is hypothetical. If what it promises is not born out in the manipulatory area, it is illusory. And the manipulation signifies what we do in terms of the "promise." The worlds of the telescope and of the microscope are not greatly different from this. They are very much as if we were at the top of a sky-scraper looking down upon the little "ants," and taking them as if they were human beings of our own size. In the spatio-temporal world this reality lies ahead. If we go down the elevator we are "promised" association with individuals like ourselves. But it may be inconvenient to go down. By reflection we bring the reality up into the now. We want to know what will be the consequences of an act which we may undertake—we state the world in such a fashion that our statement will indicate consequences that will be there in experience. The statement is hypothetical in that it is yet to be tested. But it is nevertheless a readiness to act, which doubtless would not exist with regard to the case at hand without reflection. It is an attitude of adjustment of the individual, properly called his consciousness, and is in terms of his acts. And the distant object makes explicit the hypothetical realities in so far as it answers to the responses of the organism. It is to be noted that what answers to "hypotheses that guide us truly" is not a "rational order" that mirrors the dialectic of our thinking; whatever "answers" are observable existences in nature that are denoted by the conclusions of the hypotheses. These explicit realities lie not in a transcendent world, but appear in the perspective of the individual. They are there in their own right, and do not need to be referred to consciousness.

THEODORE T. LAFFERTY.

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SOME EARLY HOLISTIC PSYCHOLOGISTS

IT has been said that it is always perilous to attempt to assign an exact origin for any scientific idea, because when we think that we have traced its history back to a dark age that must surely have marked its inception, we shall still probably find that if we go back but a little further, and again a little further, the previously assigned origin does not seem to be so definite after all. The idea does not appear to have sprung, Athena-like, out of a placid background, as we may have first thought. Its roots lie buried in a soil that is very, very deep.

That the doctrines of the Gestalt school of psychology took root in a reaction to the elementarism of associationism is probably true enough, as is also the fact that a very outstanding contribution to this reaction is to be found on the part of those defenders of *Gestalt-Qualität*, Ehrenfels, Meinong, Witasek, and others. Their rumblings of dissatisfaction with the associationist view were first heard in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Their refined experiments, and their racial connections, undoubtedly were very influential in stimulating their German confrères to formulate a Gestalt psychology, and perhaps they were the most important single factor in this regard. But they can hardly be said to be either the first or the most important psychologists to appreciate the deficiencies of an elementaristic psychology. Associationism has had many severe critics during its long tenure of dominance.

We might mention Herbart, who was too early on the scene to be an avowed critic of English associationism, as an outstanding contributor to theoretical psychology with a view of mental functioning that was far from being mechanistic. In his doctrine of "apperception," he gave very high place to an active reception of an idea by the mind, implying that this was not simply a process of addition or conglomeration. It made all the difference in the world whether the mental background, his "apperceptive mass," would really be willing to receive the new idea, in respect to its conformity, in order for that idea to gain a mental or conscious status. It must be assimilated to a totality of conscious ideas before it gains any recognition. Mechanistic laws of association, such as those of primacy, recency, contiguity, and so forth, could hardly gain for themselves much consideration from this point of view. There was here definitely an emphasis upon the "wholeness" of the mental content, and its determination of the significance of the elements, rather than that the elements were prior and by addition and complication built up our consciousness.

Even within the ranks of associationism itself we find evidence of the appreciation of the fact that there must be something else to the genesis of mind besides the mere agglomeration of elementary sensations and simple ideas. John Stuart Mill, for one, propounded his doctrine of "mental chemistry" to take care of the exceptional cases. As water is a new substance, with properties different from the oxygen and hydrogen of which it is composed, so sensations and ideas may combine to give rise to a mental content, whose qualities and properties could not have been predicted from the components taken individually or in simple addition.

A similar qualification of the doctrine of association came from the mind of Wundt in his principle of "creative synthesis." Out of a synthesis or combination of ideas came something that was wholly new or "created." His further law of "psychic relations" might also be mentioned in this connection: "a psychic content acquires significance from the other contents with which it stands in relation." The important point to be noted here is that of "relation" as opposed to that of mere contiguous context. He employed this principle in connection with the Weber law, which he interpreted in a wholly psychological manner: "a judgment of the amount of difference between two sensations is proportional to the magnitudes of the sensations" and not of the stimuli directly. In other words, a mental content gets its significance from the background that is there to receive it. This is an emphasis placed upon the "whole" of mental experience. Wundt, furthermore, made room in his psychological theory for an "active apperception," as well as a passive association.

Kulpe, in his *Outlines of Psychology,* is also critical of the doctrine of association in its more mechanical features. His remarks constitute a further step toward a clearer formulation of the factors in mental functioning that had been ignored by the classical associationists and brought into strong relief by the mental "holists." He says (page 189): "The strict school of association requires that every reproduction be brought about in the same way . . . [but] . . . there are two experiences which appear irreconcilable with this requirement. The first is direct reproduction, or the spontaneous origination of ideas, which is usually met by the assumption of unnoticed or unconscious connective terms. . . . But this is an open question.

"There is another experience, the indisputable occurrence of indirect recognition without any precedent association of the reproduced and reproducing ideas . . . without any previous implication in an associative connection of the conscious processes concerned. We do not come with vacant minds, helpless and heedless, to the

reception of new impressions. . . . [Furthermore] a painting, a musical composition, a landscape, may be effective as a whole to produce centrally excited sensations; and it can not be asserted that in every case certain individual factors of the total impression have formed the starting point of reproduction.

"Psychology can not say absolutely, even of perceived impressions, that they remain the same in spite of changes in time and circumstances." In other words there is a relativity in the significance of impressions, depending upon the mental background. The "element" is hardly an invariable thing of definite and explicit content.

Kulpe criticizes the mechanical principles of contiguity and similarity and implies that they are not the explanation of bonds between ideas, but that they are merely statements "after the fact," and that some more engrossing mechanism is responsible for their union. "A favorite instance of reproduction by similarity is the suggestion of a person by his picture . . . but in all such cases recollection only takes place if we already possess a knowledge of the significance of picture and photograph; . . . the knowledge that what we have before us is simply a copy of an object, will guide reproduction. . . . The similar does not recall the similar, but has the same effect as the similar, i.e., reproduces the same words, ideas, etc. . . . Two impressions stand in the same relation to a third. . . . Similarity and contrast are capable of quantitative gradation. Now if similarity and contrast are put forward as incentives to reproduction, we should expect that their degrees would be referred to as affording a quantitative determination of their reproducing power. . . . [But] the literature of association is silent upon this point."

In summary of his criticism, he says: "Association has often been interpreted as a causal link between ideas. Herbart has employed it in this sense for the construction of a real mechanics of ideas and their relations, their rise and fall. . . . But if the associated ideas are dependent upon cerebral conditions, we need not assume a particular causal connection between the ideas themselves. . . . Lastly the association psychology, as a rule, takes no account of the marked influence exerted upon reproduction by temporary mood, direction of the attention, etc., by general and special conditions of a central nature." The two important factors that Kulpe has emphasized, and that most associationists have ignored, in the theory of mental functioning, center around the facts that many impressions gain their value and significance from central factors, tendencies, moods, attention, background, etc., and that the reproduction of ideas must be referred to larger mental factors in the

background than the superficial connections, such as contiguity and similarity, that might exist between the elemental ideas themselves.

Of the American psychologists, James was perhaps the most outspoken of the early writers to appreciate the deficiencies of the associationist doctrine. His fulminations in particular were directed against the notion that a perception was merely the result of a combination of simple sensations, or a combination of an impression with a fringe of mental images. "A perception is not a sensation plus a lot of images from the past, but it is one state of mind. . . . Sensation does not form an independent constituent of the perception." There is "form" furthermore in our perceptions and not mere agglutination. "All brain processes are such as give rise to what we may call figured consciousness, . . . not mere hodge-podges of elements. . . . We react to a sensation in a determinate and figured fashion if possible and in as probable a fashion as the case admits. . . . Psychological concepts alter by being used." The "figuring" of consciousness and the reaction to objects in accord with background and experience are ideas that would place James definitely among the "mental holists."

In his chapter on "Discrimination and Comparison," James elaborates upon his notion of how the mind develops, and it is here in particular that we see him as a clear-thinking precursor of the Gestalt viewpoint. It is not, according to James, by association alone that the mind lives and has its being, but that discrimination, or "particularisation" as modern Gestalt psychology would term it, is an outstanding contributor to mental development.

"The truth is that experience is trained by both association and dissociation, and that psychology must be writ in both synthetic and analytic terms. . . . The simple impression of Hume, the simple idea of Locke are both abstractions, never realized in experience. Experience from the very first, presents us with concreted objects, vaguely continuous with the rest of the world which envelops them in space and time, and potentially divisible into inward elements and parts. These objects we break asunder and reunite."

Anent the positive combination of simple impressions in building up our mental content in a mechanical way, as the associationist view would have it, he says: "The undeniable fact [is] that any number of impressions, from any number of sensory sources, falling simultaneously on a mind which has not yet experienced them separately, will fuse into a single undivided object for that mind. The law is that all things fuse that can and nothing separates except what must. . . . Although they separate easier if they come in through distinct nerves, yet distinct nerves are not an unconditional ground of their discrimination."

The idea of space is not, according to him, an agglomeration of all the little spaces that come to us through the various avenues of differing sensory experience, but that it is a global, massive, (if vague) thing right from the first. 'The baby assailed by eyes, ears, nose, skin, and entrails at once, feels it all as one great blooming, buzzing confusion: and to the very end of life our location of all things in one space is due to the fact that the original extents or bignesses of all the sensations which come to our notice at once, coalesced together into one and the same space. There is no other reason than this why 'the hand I touch and see coincided spatially with the hand I immediately feel.' "

Our mental content does not apparently contain the classical elementary impressions in an actual but well-concealed state. That our first unanalysed sensation was really composed of these elementary sensations "is nothing but the fatal 'psychologists' fallacy' of treating an inferior state of mind as if it must somehow know implicitly all that is explicitly known about the same topic by a superior state of mind. The thing thought of is unquestionably the same, but it is thought twice over in two absolutely different psychoses—once as an unbroken unit, and again as a sum of discriminated parts. It is not one thought in two editions, but two entirely distinct thoughts of one thing. And each thought is within itself a 'continuum,' a 'plenum,' needing no contributions from the other to fill up its gaps."

From out of the first vague, undifferentiated whole of mental content, we discriminate the things that are later on to be known as elements. The elements, then, are secondary, and not primary. The elements that we arrive at finally, and the nicety of the discrimination will depend upon the extent to which the process has been carried. We all may differ, as individuals in this, and our elements, accordingly, will depend upon what has gone on within each of us personally up to a certain time. "We all cease analysing the world at some point, and notice no more differences. The last units with which we stop are our objective elements of being. Those of a dog are different from those of a Humboldt; those of a practical man from those of a metaphysician. But the dog's and the practical man's thoughts *feel* continuous, though to the Humboldt or the metaphysician they would appear full of gaps and defects. And they are continuous, as thoughts. It is only as mirrors of things that the superior minds find them full of omissions. And when the omitted things are discovered and the unnoticed differences laid bare, it is not that the old thoughts split up, but that new thoughts supersede them, which make new judgments about the same objective world."

When James speaks of a "felt difference" between things without the consciousness of the individual differing elements being necessarily presupposed, we of the present day are reminded of the "configurations" and the "gradients" of Gestalt psychology. That we can be conscious of movements in time or space, or of gradients up or down a scale, without at the same time being aware of the elements or steps of which the scale is composed, or of the individual objects that are being moved, is not such a far cry from the contention of James that differences may be felt, and that a time series may be directly perceived as such, without any discrimination of the elementary objective moments, or things that are at the basis, in the real world, of the time series, or of the perceived difference. "We are forced to deny that differential discrimination can everywhere be reduced to the mere 'ascertainment that elements present in one fact, in another fail to exist. . . . The difference, thus immediately felt between two terms, is independent of our ability to identify either of the terms by itself. . . . Even inferred differences all end in a direct intuition of difference somewhere."

Even when the elements are discriminated to some extent, their significance depends upon the series in which they are found, and not upon any absolute value that may accrue to them of themselves. "As our brains and minds are actually made, it is impossible to get certain m's and n's in immediate sequence and to keep them pure. . . . In addition to being felt at the brief instant of transition, the difference also feels as if incorporated and taken up into the second term, which feels 'different-from-the-first' even while it lasts. It is obvious that the second term of the mind in this case is not bald 'n,' but a very complex object: and that the sequence is not simply first 'm,' then 'difference,' then 'n'; but first 'm,' then difference, then 'n-different-from-m.'" So much for the "elements" as discrete mental entities, and their dependence upon their setting.

James offers a suggestion as to what he thinks of the manner in which the "elements" come into being. They are analysed out of the total, undifferentiated first state, and experience brings this about by setting off these elements in varying backgrounds, so that they eventually stand out of their own accord, or due to their claim upon an independent real existence. Experience of an element in many and varied situations is a condition *sine qua non* of its emergence. "Any total impression made on the mind must be unanalyzable whose elements are never experienced apart. The components of an absolutely changeless group of not-elsewhere-occurring attributes could never be discriminated. . . . What is associated now with one thing and now with another tends to become dissociated from either, and to grow into an object of abstract contem-

plation of the mind. One might call this the law of dissociation by varying concomitants. . . . Where a distinction has not practical interest, where we gain nothing by analysing a feature from out of the compound total of which it forms a part, we contract a habit of leaving it unnoticed, and at last grow callous to its presence."

We may take as James' parting shot at associationism that "it is not ideas that are associated, but things." The mental reaction to things is the important factor, and not the mere registration of simple impressions, or even their addition and complications. If we but changed his terminology in a few instances to accord with that of the modern configurationist school, his statements could very easily masquerade as promulgations of the Gestalters.

Since American and English psychologists very early and very avidly seized upon the neurone theory of neurology, and the reflex arc concept in its functioning, to give a physiological basis for their doctrines, it is interesting to take an example of the reaction against this tendency, and to consider how it breathes defiance of the classical theory on the one hand, and previsions the configurationist view on the other. Dewey, in an article in the *Psychological Review* of 1896, on the "Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," had much to say to the point. He inveighs particularly against the independence of the elementary sensation, and stresses a larger, organismic factor in giving both the sensation and the reflex their significance.

He says: "The reflex arc idea, as commonly employed, is defective in that it assumes sensory stimulus and motor response as distinct psychical existences, while in reality they are always inside a coördination and have their significance purely from the part played in maintaining and reconstituting the coördination." The status of the individual prior to receiving the stimulus can not be irrelevant either to its quantity or quality. That the stimulus should reach the individual through a particular sensory avenue, furthermore, does not imply that all the sensory centers do not contribute to the setting and the total effect. "It is absolutely impossible to think of the eye center as monopolizing consciousness and the ear apparatus as wholly quiescent. What happens is a certain relative prominence and subsidence as between the various organs which maintain the organic-equilibrium." In other words, the reflex response is not a particulate response to a definite stimulus, but it is the reaction of the whole organism to a certain feature emerging from a total background of sense-qualities. We need only to include the word "configuration" in such a statement to make it perfectly good orthodox Gestaltism.

"What we have is a circuit, not an arc or broken segment of a circle. . . . Indeed the movement is only for the sake of determin-

ing the stimulus, of fixing what kind of a stimulus it is, of interpreting it. . . . What precedes the stimulus is a whole act, a sensori-motor coördination. What is more to the point, the 'stimulus' emerges out of this coördination; it is born from it as its matrix; it represents as it were an escape from it. . . . In the physical process, as physical, there is nothing which can be set off as stimulus, nothing which reacts, nothing which is response. There is just a change in the system of tensions. . . . It is an act, a sensori-motor coördination which stimulates the response, itself in turn sensori-motor, not a sensation which stimulates a movement.

"The sensation or conscious stimulus is not a thing or existence by itself; it is that phase of a coördination requiring attention because, by reason of the conflict within the coördination, it is uncertain how to complete it. . . . Sensation is simply a *function* and will have its value shift according to the special work requiring to be done. . . . What the sensation will be in particular at a given time, therefore, will depend entirely upon the way in which an activity is being used. It has no fixed quality of its own. . . . The stimulus is that phase of the forming coördination which represents the conditions which have to be met in bringing it to a successful issue; the response is that phase of one and the same coördination which gives the key to meeting these conditions, which serves as instrument in effecting the successful coördination."

In these statements we find an appreciation of the organismic view in modern psychology, and an expression of the reaction against the notion of the unalterability of the sensation or its value. Both of these have been stressed of late by the Gestalters.

Dewey became known as a "functionalist," because of his expressed views. Another functionalist who had something to say in criticism of the associationist viewpoint, was Stout, in his *Analytical Psychology,* published in 1902. "The fundamental fallacy of the associationists lies in their bias towards psychological atomism. . . . From this point of view the parts must be supposed to pre-exist in such a way that they need only to be in some undefined manner externally brought together or associated in order to constitute the whole which contains them.

"From this primary fallacy flow three derivative errors. The first is the exclusive emphasis it lays upon mere combination. As against this view, we advance the counter-proposition that every new synthesis results from the further determination of a psychical whole which in some way already pre-exists. The new synthesis consists in the distinction and definition of the parts and relations within this prior whole. . . . In the second place, there is a complete failure on the part of the associationists to recognize the ap-

prehension of 'form' of combination as a distinct psychical element. . . . Finally the associationist has a strong disposition to regard mental elements as entering new combinations without themselves undergoing transformation in the process. This never is and never can be true. Elements which enter into a new whole, receive new qualifications from their relations within this whole."

While these views of Stout would probably not come so close to receiving the imprint of orthodoxy at the hands of modern configurationists as those of James, still we can make out a definite trend or tendency in them if we place in opposition the associationists on the one hand and the Gestalters on the other.

One might think offhand that he could turn to the more humane, generalizing, "tender-minded" mentality of the French for qualifying nuances that would bring an associationist doctrine more in line with these tendencies, and eliminate much of its "tough-minded" mechanism. He would probably be rewarded in many instances, as he certainly would be in reviewing Piéron's discussion of mediate association, appearing in the *Révue Philosophique* for 1903. He says that English associationists are too mechanical, for behind the mechanical laws of association are to be found more fundamental laws of personal consciousness and psychic activity in general. The importance of these general factors are not to be overlooked.

In giving an example of the association of ideas in a dream, or during distraction, he says: "An idea acts upon the subconscious domains and tends to drive out of it an element, but this element arouses another idea, etc., which is more interesting and more attractive to the *personal synthesis;* the last only appears in consciousness." The general factor of relatedness to the whole personality, or mental background of the moment, would then appear to be the determining factor in the arousal of ideas, and not hypothetical mechanical bonds formed between the ideas themselves. There is an implication of "wholeness" here from which the idea emerges and by which it is accepted.

Piéron criticizes experiments in association because the conditions are too artificial, forcing the associations or using nonsense material, and he says that for the most part they are conceived in "accordance with the general prejudice that ideas are joined together like links in a chain." In the normal functioning of the human mind, these forms of association are extremely rare. Most associations are those of parts of a same whole among themselves or with the whole. A tree and a stream are often associated because they are parts of the same country-side. On this basis, all association by contiguity is mediate, particularly in ordinary life.

The association is mediated through reference to a larger whole, an underlying background, or a personal act of synthesis. In his stress upon the relation of the "whole" to association, we should place Piéron definitely on the side of the mental "holists."

It would not be an easy matter to say that the views given expression to here were in the direct line of descent that gave birth to the modern configurationist viewpoint in psychology, nor a safe one. We never know just how much a person owes in his own mental development to those who have preceded him, and whose thoughts he has either come into contact with directly through writings, or absorbed unconsciously from his scientific background. But we should probably not wish to deny that the men whose views have been quoted here had at least this much in common with the modern proponents of the configurationist viewpoint: they felt that they were impelled to express themselves as opposed to a too elementaristic and mechanical view of the human mind. Their positive contributions have not always shown the same trend, but wherever they are clear in their ideas, they seem to agree in demanding a more organismic, phenomenalistic, and "holistic" approach to the study of psychology.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Contemporary and His Soul. IRWIN EDMAN. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1931. Pp. vii + 191.

In summing up the philosophy of disillusionment, Edman writes: "The cure of the cult of disillusion, in so far as it is something more than the plaything of verbal sophisticates, is not by argument, but by social transformation. Not a new argument but a new society will cure the soul of man." It sometimes seems as if this must be the final word. The trouble with the soul of man to-day is not that it suffers from a confusion of ideas and beliefs—that it has no clear philosophy, but, far more deeply, that it has no man-sized job. The Time Spirit seems to have placed us in a period where, all equipped with the best science and the best intentions, we have nothing to do—nothing that is great enough to evoke an enthusiasm and enlist a complete devotion. Hence the various retreats—into the despair (and sweetness) of disillusion, into timeless essences, into a romanticized past, into a dogged, mind-shattering sensualism. "Disillusion," writes Edman again, "does not occur where there is animal satisfaction, creative absorption, or civic fulfillment. The satisfied

animal, the working artist, and the enterprising citizen are three types of beings who have not the capacity for disillusion. But sensuality and enterprise have both become difficult for the modern, and artistic creation in this, as in any age, is possible only to a few."

Edman's analysis of the various ways of retreat from reality is masterly. And yet one is brought to reflect. When the philosopher has done all this analyzing, whom has he convinced? Not the disillusionists, for disillusion is their one claim to significance; it is their dear joy. Not those who fly to the timeless essences. Why do they fly? Because the transient for them is so completely self-defeating. Not those who pack up their intellectual goods and take their departure to the long distant past. Why do they depart? Precisely because they can not find in the present that sense of glory which seems once to have been in the world. Not the sensualists, for they—Hemingwaywise—are too occupied with their meaningless sensualities even to look into a book—and that book one on philosophy. What one must conclude, then, is that this philosopher is writing his own *apologia* for not doing as these others do. And he is heartening the rest of us who have retained a kind of sneaking notion that there are values here and now that may be cultivated without evasion or a blush of shame. Also, no doubt, he is writing for those wavering ones who are almost disillusioned, almost ready to escape to some ivory tower of essences or sensualism, but who are waiting for a possible word of illumination that may enable them to make a final, wise decision. For the last named, this book will be of very great value, for it sets out the various self-defeats of those retreating ways of life with an utter clarity and points the way to vigorous participation in the life situation.

But one returns inevitably to the major consideration. The trouble with the world to-day is—the world. We live in environments that do not easily arouse enthusiasm and absorption. Certainly to be asked to function as a citizen to-day is not highly inspiriting. The young people shrug their shoulders and reply: "What's the use?" The older ones sigh and return to the stock reports. Even to function as a business man would seem hardly to provide for an ardent, self-dedicated life. Business is still the rather low-geared, hard-boiled process that we know it to be, and one goes into it—if one does—as part of the grim necessity of making a living. Religion has faded into a weak request that it be permitted to continue tax-free. Art is the province of the aberrant and the queer. The theater, firm in the hands of the box office, devotes itself to the adolescent mind. Music is increasingly for the crooners and the saxophonists.

And philosophy? A good deal of it—of the academic kind—is to be found joining Edman's retreaters—particularly those who retreat to eternal essences and to the past. What is philosophy to do to-day? A very penetrating analysis of this book would seem to point in this direction: The need is for a kind of world that enlists enthusiasm and devotion, and the philosopher is to be a leader in generating that world. Plato busied himself with thoughts of an ideal Republic. Is not the philosopher's task to-day to set himself to this central problem, the problem of organizing an environment that will evoke the ardent devotions of men. The nearest that we have come to this, it seems to me, is in the work of John Dewey in reconstructing the school life of children. Here is a case where a philosopher, recognizing the self-defeat of the prevailing childhood environment, set himself to think out—and to work out—a more vitalizing environment. Is it possible for the philosopher, in the same way, to think out—and to work out—more vitalizing environments in business and citizenship and social life? John Dewey effected a kind of revolution in the world of childhood. Is it possible to effect a kind of revolution in the world of adulthood? One thinks at once of the movement—just beginning to take shape—of adult education. Is there not here a promising field for the philosopher? And one thinks particularly of that striking episode in European history, the actual transformation of adult life in Denmark through the work of Grundvig and the adult schools.

The vigorous call of this book is to participation in and reconstruction of the life that is. "So far from regarding nature as anything hostile or alien or absurd, as was the sentimental fashion of the nineteenth century, or such echoes of it as we find in Bertrand Russell or Aldous Huxley or Joseph Wood Krutch's *The Modern Temper* in the twentieth, we are inclined to regard it as being, like Jehovah, *that* that is. And what it is is the matrix and material of all our ideals and the locus of all possible destinies." "A truly radical revolution," he goes on to say, "would be one that envisaged the whole of life as the material and procedure and the field of art where the enjoyment and the activities of art were universalized, where work had meaning and enrichment for those who performed it, where amusements ceased to be trivial and labor ceased to be vain." It is to the acceptance of the world as matrix and possibility that the call is made in this book. But the philosopher, as Edman's analysis seems to imply, will have to do more than argue about it. He will have, like the maieutic Socrates, to do some helping of the new world into birth.

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A Crusade for Humanity: The History of Organized Positivism in England. JOHN EDWIN MCGEE. London: Watts & Co. 1931. viii + 249 pp.

According to Professor Carlton J. H. Hayes, with the aid of whose advice this book was written, it "fills a notable gap in the literature of the subject, and provides such a sound and well-documented history as to obviate the need of anyone else's doing the thing again." If the "thing" in question is a laborious compilation of the facts about Positivism as an organized religious movement in England, Professor Hayes is quite correct, and Mr. McGee deserves our unstinted thanks. But while the social historian may rest content, the student of the psychology and philosophy of religion will continue to hope for a more vivid description and a more penetrating interpretation of English Positivism than is here supplied. We can get along without an up-to-date fictional dramatization; but can not someone make us understand how it felt to be a Congrevian or a Harrisonian Positivist in those far-from-gay London 'nineties? How much did the Comtian prayers and sacraments mean to all the men and women Mr. McGee has so painstakingly catalogued for us? Why did religious (although not ecclesiastical) Positivism appeal so strongly to a Frederic Harrison, and not at all to a Harriet Martineau? Religions, even humanistic ones, are of acts and feelings all compact, or else they are very little. Names and dates, minutes and resolutions, all these are valuable as matters of record, but they are little more than raw material, in their present form, for a thorough understanding of Positivism as a living religion in England and elsewhere. Can it be that uninspired religions attract only uninspired historians?

To accomplish the larger task of interpretation, one would have to begin with a profounder study, not only of the nature of religion in general, but of Positivism as a philosophy and of August Comte as a personality, than is evidenced in the volume under discussion. In his introductory chapter on "The Religion and Its Founder," Mr. McGee gives nothing like an adequate exposition, even for a purely historical account, of the manifold sources of Comte's ideas; of the personal traits which so vitally affected the formulation of the Religion of Humanity; of the admiration for the Middle Ages (learned from Saint-Simon) which explains so much of Comte's "Catholicism"; or of the schism among his French followers provoked by the influence of Clotilde de Vaux and the alleged "second career,"—to mention only a few essential factors. And concerning the author's estimate of the "Significance of the English Positivist Movement" in his concluding chapter, the fact that he limits it to eight brief pages is eloquent beyond any possible criticism.

There also appears to be little within the covers of the present history to justify its rather dramatic title of "A Crusade for Humanity." Whatever crusading spirit may have animated the more ardent of the English Positivists in the early days of the movement, it soon evaporated into something far too dignified and well-bred to be associated with even the tamest of the Crusades. Mr. McGee advances as its central theme the idea of conciliation and compromise, than which no notion lends itself less readily to crusading purposes. The life-blood of evangelism is over-emphasis, and not even the saints of English Positivism could manage to over-emphasize the idea of avoiding over-emphasis. They took perpetually the middle ground,—between science and religion, employer and employee, aristocrat and democrat, feminist and anti-feminist, imperialist and little Englander. That is to say, they annoyed everyone, in a century of bitter conflict, by finding some good and some evil in every idea presented. As a result they could look for recruits only among that minute minority of the human race who were passionately interested in nothing but impartiality and balanced judgment.

But if English religious Positivism was hardly a crusade, it was nevertheless an instructive attempt to construct a religion from materials which were almost equally compounded of philosophy and pathology. Many of the latter aberrations, traceable to Comte's desperate sublimation of his passion for Madame de Vaux, were quietly dropped in the process of crossing the Channel and so ceased to handicap the new religion in its appeal to British common sense. But even without a great deal of Comte's rigid ritualistic nonsense, it remained too priestly, too papist, and too French to be generally acceptable. The wonder is, not that English Positivism failed, but that it appealed to so many fine minds at the same time that it seemed so utterly ridiculous to others, and was thus enabled to win a few minor successes. These were not, as the author's statements show, in the field of religion, but in controversies over science, history, diplomacy, economics, and politics generally. Even there the verdict too often correctly reads: "As usual, the agitation of the Positivists had no appreciable effect upon the trend of events." Like their rivals the Secularists, Unitarians, and Christian Socialists (to whose interrelations the author should have given more attention), the Positivists saw their mild thunder stolen and their battles won for them by participants in the struggle who were outside their zone of direct influence. So that if organized Positivism has practically disappeared in England to-day, it is partly because so many of the objectives of the English movement have been passed or rendered obsolete by the march of events in the last half-

century. The more strictly Comtian objectives, it should be noted, are still far away.

None of these criticisms should be allowed to obscure the real merits of Mr. McGee's narrative. He has told in admirable detail the story of the beginnings of English Positivism in the group around Richard Congreve at the evangelical Wadham College, Oxford; of the schism in the sect whose main tenet was concord, whereby the Congrevians were left free to found the Church of Humanity, while the Harrisonians devoted themselves to the School of Positivism; and of the healing of the breach, which has not yet served to ward off the peril of complete extinction. He notes that the passing of Frederic Harrison in 1923 "marked the passing of the last claim which the Positivists had to national attention." In fact the whole history of the movement has been marked by such an enormous discrepancy between the influence of its leaders and the number of its rank-and-file, that a careful study of the lives of Congreve, Harrison, Bridges, and Beesly was bound to make up the bulk of the story. The book contains a list of 487 items of "Materials Consulted," including many circulars and leaflets not easily available. But there is no index.

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NOTES AND NEWS

We have received a Preliminary Announcement of the 1932 Meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association as follows:

The Annual Meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association will occur at Bryn Mawr late in December. Bryn Mawr College will be the host.

The program will be made up as usual. It is to be noted that the Program Committee was instructed at the last meeting to select papers with the following considerations in mind:

"(1) Scholarly attainment from the standpoint of accuracy and originality, (2) Length—not exceeding 2,000 words, (3) Form,

style and manner of treatment suitable for presentation to, and discussion by, members of the Division."

Members who have papers to present should communicate at once with the incoming secretary, Professor Harold A. Larrabee, Department of Philosophy, Union College, Schenectady, New York, giving an idea of the subject matter of the proposed paper. It is urged that final manuscripts be in by November 1st. A later announcement will give details of time and place of meeting. Professor Larrabee has been appointed by the Executive Committee to serve as Secretary-Treasurer during my absence in Europe. After June 1st all communications should be addressed to him.

F. S. C. NORTHROP, *Secretary,*
1891 Yale Station, New Haven, Conn.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY:

At the last meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association it was voted to appoint a Committee (to which the undersigned were later appointed by the incoming President) to consider the question of bringing vacancies in Philosophy to the attention of candidates for those vacancies. The incoming President, Professor Spaulding, and the members of the Committee, feel that some action should be taken at once instead of waiting to report at the next meeting of the Association any projects which the Committee may have in mind. The Committee accordingly recommends:

(1) That all colleges and universities expecting to make additions to their staffs in Philosophy be invited to report this fact, and if possible the nature of the vacancy, to the Chairman.

(2) That all candidates for positions in Philosophy forward their names and addresses to the Chairman of the Committee. The candidates will then be promptly informed of what vacancies exist, so that they can proceed to promote their candidacy by whatever means they may choose.

The Committee realizes that there are few vacancies at this time, and also that there are already established methods of filling such vacancies as do exist; but feels that nothing should be left undone that could possibly be of service in the present crisis.

R. B. PERRY, Harvard University,
G. D. WALCOTT, Long Island University,
H. B. SMITH, University of Pennsylvania, *Chairman.*